7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

I didn't see any water buffalo in Hunza itself, but they are to be found in the Gilgit area and therefore I suspect they are to be found, if not in the principality of Hunza, at least in close proximity. Well, if you find water buffalo, then there is sure to be the Mana or Lali bird. It's a medium sized bird that is very much like our cow bird. He perches right on the back of the water buffalo and works away like a woodpecker, picking out the insects that infest the water buffalo's leathery hide. Thus, he prevents serious injury and disease from spreading from the hide into the flesh of the animal.

This is just another one of the myriad of intricacies that follow in the paths of Mother Nature—how she seeks to balance things for the benefit of all. Here the bird finds a way and means of obtaining food and nourishment and the buffalo keeps healthy and everybody is happy!

Ibex are part and parcel of the Hunza scene. So are the ovis poli or mountain sheep which are actually quite scarce, but are found if one goes high enough into the mountains. The Hunzans call the ibex "markhors." I learned that "markhor" means "eater of snakes," for the ibex, which are actually goats, are known to the people of Hunza for this habit. This also indicates that snakes are found in Hunza. As a matter of fact, every now and then one hears or comes across a snake on the trail. When this happens on a narrow trail high up on a ledge and your horse rears on his hind legs, pawing with his fore . . . 'tis not conducive to a long and boring life!

The Mir of Hunza is quite a hunter. He enjoys shooting and is a true sportsman. My friend, the P.A. at Gilgit, is also an ardent sportsman. Between them, they told me that they had bagged, at one time or another, crows, vultures, golden eagles, geese and ducks, pheasants (two kinds), chicoris (which are their partridge),

136 pigeons and doves. They also vouch for the fact that sparrows, skylarks, nightingales, canaries, magpies, falcons and hawks were part of the common scene throughout the district.

The P.A. told me that on his hunting excursions he has on a few occasions come across both brown and black bears and I know there are also leopards, because the P.A. presented me with the hide of one of them, which now graces the living room of my son's home.

Inasmuch as small animals are concerned, I don't think you'd find too many. They like to go where food is more readily available than is the case in the sparsely vegetated Hunza area.

[134] I don't think burrowing animals would be common to the district, because one can't very readily burrow through rock, and that is what 99% of the Hunza terrain consists of.

231 Incidentally, the goats that are kept by the Hunzan farmers are not by any stretch of the imagination similar to the larger ibex that are found in the hills. The Hunza goat is a diminutive fellow that is bred for its dwarfness and ability to give lots of milk for its size.

223 Apart from the fall duck hunt when myriads are
• 224 felled, and the occasional hunt with shikari to bring down the renowned ovis poli (Marco Polo sheep) from the 18,000 foot pinnacles, Hunza cannot be called a hunter's paradise.

136 I was of the opinion that the ibex are quite plentiful, and if anyone went to Hunza with the idea of shooting game, he could without too much difficulty satisfy his bent.

[224] Then, too, the rare ovis poli, the true Marco Polo sheep, can also be found in this area. While they are by no means easy to locate, if you took the trouble to arrange for proper trackers or shikari, I'm quite certain that within one or two days' travel you would find and shoot ovis poli. If you're going to try to tackle the Marco Polo sheep, make sure you're a good mountain climber, because they are seldom found below 16,000 feet and usually a thousand or two thousand feet above that.

I asked the Mir where the big difference came in between the ibex and the ovis poli. It seems that the ovis poli are larger with a body as large as that of a donkey and the horns have three distinct sweeps. Of course the ibex is a goat and the ovis poli is a sheep.

He wanted to know if I was interested in shooting them. I said, "No, thanks. There are many other pleasures I prefer."

I can understand and appreciate the shooting of game for food or clothing but for sport . . . well, I've always felt that a man can prove his prowess without slaying useful, harmless beasts. Let it be said in fairness to the sportsman and hunter that in most cases he protects, disseminates and raises more than he shoots and therefore he pays for his sport. If it were not for the true sportsman (and I am saying that qualifiedly and reservedly—the *true* sportsman) many birds and beasts that exist today would have been exterminated by wanton killers, who also sometimes parade under the name of "sportsmen."

I will go along further and say that the sportsman